

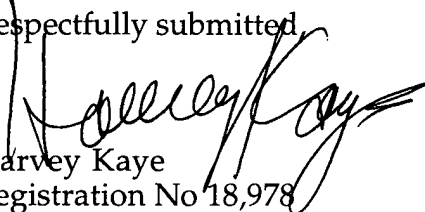
Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Juneau either individually or in view of Sonoda. The claims recite the cover material as being sealed to provide a water-proof, air tight mat. Admittedly Juneau does not disclose such a structure. Throughout his specification Juneau emphasizes that his floor covering is of two layers of material forming a top sheet and a backing sheet. The backing sheet must be at least three times the thickness of the top sheet.

Sonoda describes a stair tread formed of a synthetic rubber which encases a metal core. This is completely inconsistent with the backing sheet of Juneau and therefore it would not be obvious to combine the alleged teachings as suggested in the Office action. The two references are incompatible in that the core of Sonoda is of steel whereas Juneau uses a backing sheet which deforms under the force of a small load.

Therefore it is believed the claims are patentable over the references used in the rejection.

A request for an extension of time for one month is attached so that the filing of this response is timely, since December 7, 2002 was a Saturday.

Respectfully submitted,


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Claim Attachment

1. (amended) An icebreaker mat comprising:

(A) [a product made of] a slip-resistant, non-adhering, water-proof cover material, which contains a flexible core [substance of styrofoam, foam, or other] material [suitable to provide the same results. Sealed], said cover material being sealed so as to provide a water-proof, air tight, flexible stair mat, [pad or stair tread attachment.] ;

(B) [once assembled and sealed into one unit, the icebreaker] said mat [will provide] providing a safe and convenient method of eliminating ice from exterior stairs and open walking areas of a porch or landing.

[(C) although the icebreaker mat has an overall size of 9"X 36"X1/4", and is set at that dimension so as to provide walking space for two persons, side by side, it is not limited to that size, for it could be produced shorter, or longer if the need should arise. Therefore the icebreaker mat is not limited to the size in which it is being presented.]